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The discussion about being paid always revolves around “that we can do more workshops”. The side issue of AVP facilitators being dominated by white elderly people is more a reflection of the past and the issue of being able to bring all participants (particularly returning citizens) into the facilitator role is something we will work on fixing as it is a fundamental flaw.

What is frequently over looked by those who wish to be paid is that when this happens it soon becomes the same few who do the facilitation - that they do not (usually by practising selection) have an open door for the participants to become facilitators if they wish - the message instead at the beginning of the workshop is ‘them and us’. That clearly undermines the long term grounding of AVP and ends up with an exclusive ‘elite’ who then decide what is and what is not AVP and most importantly ‘who is and who is not’ a ‘suitable’ facilitator.

AVP does grow slowly and cycles also - and being able to pay facilitator expenses is something which will become part of our structure as will stipends to replace lost income. The premise will be that each facilitator will still be offering their participation - and that thereby will ensure that AVP will be very appealing to funders who will understand this fundamental, attribute it high value and so appreciate that the work we do is given (because of the love of being part of the workshop). All we ask is that the facilitator incurs no financial cost to themselves and that the funders are limited to this cost primarily. Additionally however, giving facilitators a salary to do the organizational work outside of the workshop is a necessity as AVP grows - we need skilled AVPers to be able to give full attention to the fundamental structural necessities which present lack thereof holds us back - it is this which is our principle problem in causing only slow growth - not the lack of facilitators.

We have great numbers of excellent facilitators - in the workshop the participants quickly realize that each facilitator is not different from them and we accomplish that simply by the promise that they too can apprentice and then join teams. If AVP was to be professionalized then that promise cannot be made and so the workshops effectiveness is reduced - inclusion is compromised - the workshop becomes something which the participants ‘achieve’ and ‘learn’ rather than integrate into naturally. We will not be able to love it whole heartedly because of the distance created between facilitators and participants. Subsequently, professionalization would result in AVP becoming one more NGO in the world competing to offer a service - that will compromise the connection to primary joy of being included.

The idea of Spin offs is the means for those who wish to be paid not to change our essence but enables them to offer their version of AVP - but with a different name.